

**RCIA: Symbolon Lesson 3: The Bible**  
**We Believe, Chapter 15 – Communicating with God - Prayer**

**- Opening Prayer:**

*O Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart, that I might hear your word  
and understand your will, for I am a pilgrim upon the earth.  
Do not hide your Commandments from me, but open my eyes, that I may perceive  
the wonders of your law. Speak to me the hidden secrets of your wisdom.  
On you I set my hope, O my God, that you shall enlighten my mind and understanding  
with the light of your knowledge, not only to cherish those things which are written,  
but to do them; for from you comes every good deed and every gift. Amen*

- St. John Chrysostom

**- Song: Seek Ye First**

**- Discussion of Prayer:**

*“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.”* St. Therese of Lisieux

**Types of Prayer:**

Personal prayer – Personal prayer is a deeply intimate and individual way to communicate with God. It allows you to express your thoughts, feelings, and desires directly to Him. Here are some aspects of personal prayer:

1. **Honesty:** Speak openly and honestly with God about your joys, struggles, and needs.
2. **Listening:** Take time to be silent and listen for God’s guidance and response.
3. **Consistency:** Make prayer a regular part of your daily routine.
4. **Scripture:** Use Bible verses to guide your prayers and reflect on God’s promises.
5. **Gratitude:** Always include thanks for the blessings in your life.
6. **Confession:** Admit your mistakes and seek forgiveness.
7. **Petition:** Ask for God’s help in specific areas of your life.
8. **Intercession:** Pray for the needs of others as well as your own.
9. **Reflection:** Spend time reflecting on your prayers and how God is working in your life.

Personal prayer can be done anywhere and at any time, making it a flexible and powerful way to stay connected with God. **CCC 2559**

Vocal prayer – common prayers or conversational/extemporaneous

Meditation – Lectio Divina (see below)

Communal Prayer – Liturgy (Mass/Liturgy of the Hours/prayer groups/etc.)

Why is it important to spend time in prayer?

**- Questions for Discussion:**

- The Catholic Church believes the Holy Scriptures contained in the Bible are inspired by God. What does this mean? If the books of the Bible were written by men, how can the Church teach that God is the source, the author, of the Bible?

105 God is the author of Sacred Scripture. "The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of Sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."<sup>69</sup>

"For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself."<sup>70</sup>

106 God inspired the human authors of the sacred books. "To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their own faculties and powers so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more."<sup>71</sup>

107 The inspired books teach the truth. "Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures."<sup>72</sup>

- How did the Church determine what books belong in the Bible and which ones do not? Why do Catholic Bibles have more books than Protestant Bibles? Catholic and Protestant Bibles both include 27 books in the New Testament. Protestant Bibles have only 39 books in the Old Testament, however, while Catholic Bibles have 46. The seven books included in Catholic Bibles are Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, and Baruch. Catholic Bibles also include sections in the Books of Esther and Daniel which are not found in Protestant Bibles. These books are called the deuterocanonical books. The Catholic Church believes these books to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- What does it mean that Catholics don't interpret the Bible in a "literalistic" way, but rather interpret the Bible "literarily"?
- What is the one main story line that is consistently woven throughout the 73 books of the Bible? (Salvation)
- Is there a verse from Scripture that is particularly meaningful to you? How do you think God is speaking to you through that verse?

- **Weekly Gospel Reading:** 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time [Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48](#)

At that time, John said to Jesus,  
"Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name,  
and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us."

Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him.

There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name  
who can at the same time speak ill of me.

For whoever is not against us is for us.

Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink  
because you belong to Christ,

amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin,  
it would be better for him if a great millstone  
were put around his neck  
and he were thrown into the sea.

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter into life maimed  
than with two hands to go into Gehenna,  
into the unquenchable fire.

And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter into life crippled  
than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna.

And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out.

Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye  
than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna,  
where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'"

### **Lectio Divina**

1. **Lectio:** Read the passage slowly, perhaps several times. Let a phrase or two catch your attention.
2. **Meditatio:** Reflect on the meaning of the words you have chosen. How is God speaking to you through this reading?
3. **Oratio:** Raise your mind and heart to God, using the message of this reading.
4. **Contemplatio:** Rest quietly in the presence of God.
5. **Actio:** Resolve to change your life in some positive way.

- **Closing Prayer:**